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AUGUST 8, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 17

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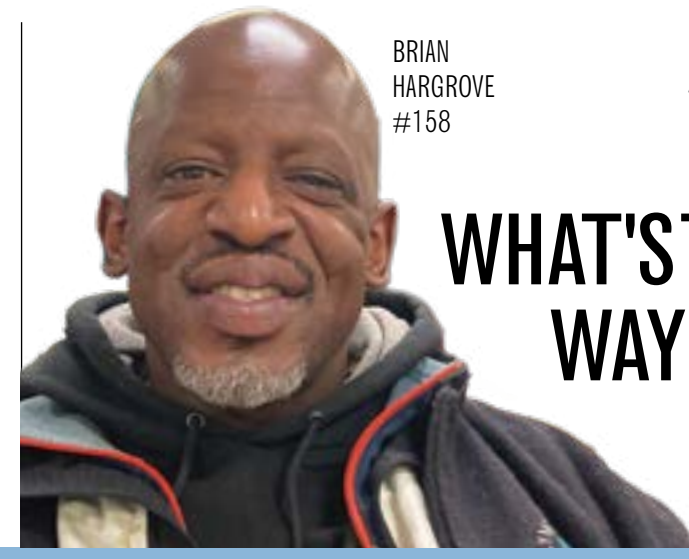
Hear Me Out: Ann Arbor needs a real day center. **page 9**

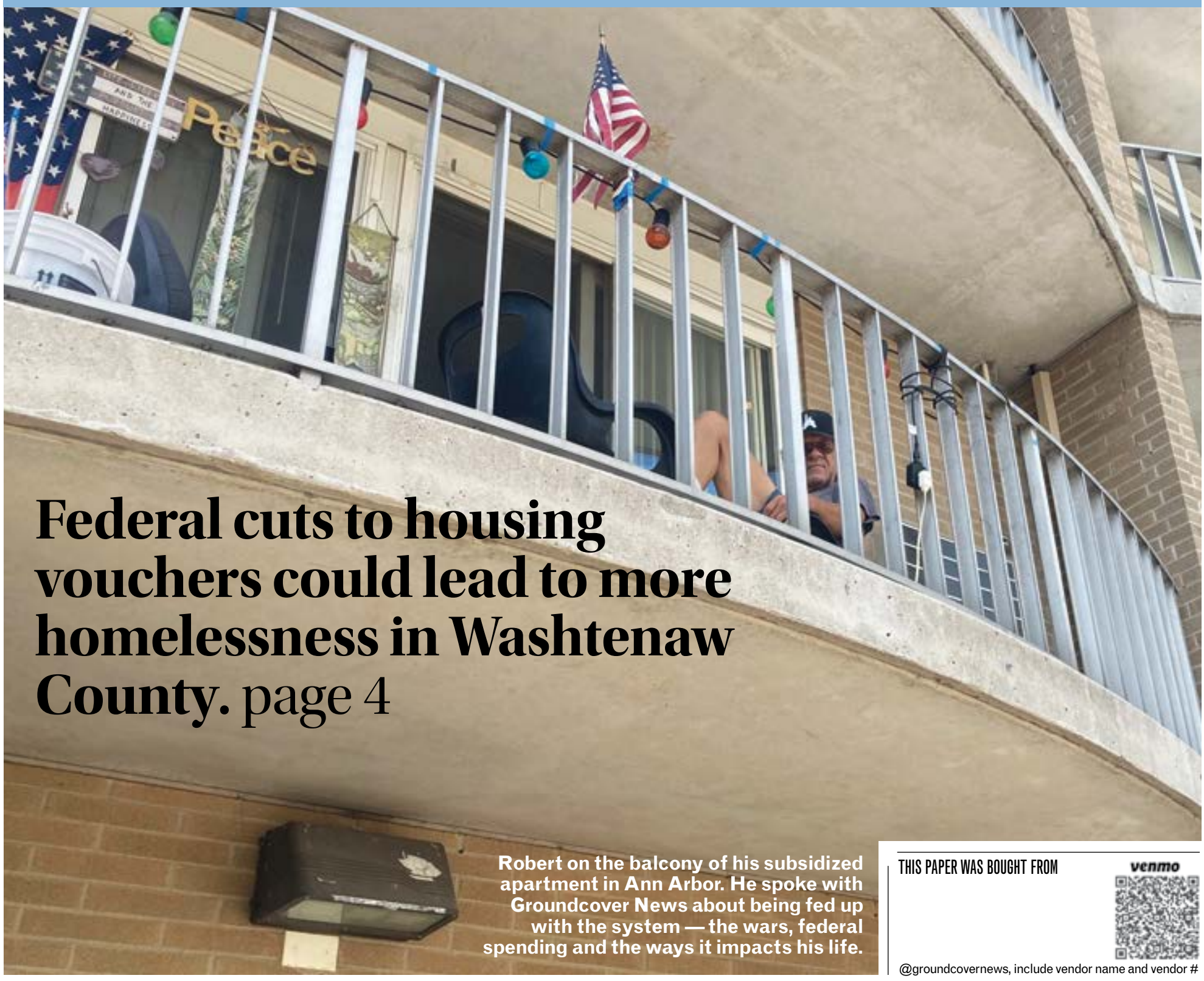


BRIAN HARGROVE #158

ASK YOUR VENDOR: WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO START THE DAY?

GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Federal cuts to housing vouchers could lead to more homelessness in Washtenaw County. page 4

Robert on the balcony of his subsidized apartment in Ann Arbor. He spoke with Groundcover News about being fed up with the system — the wars, federal spending and the ways it impacts his life.

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network of Street Papers

Groundcover's annual $15 special edition magazine hit the streets August 1, 2025. It is filled with vendor family recipes, restaurant reviews, essays and reports on all things FOOD! + a TeaHaus coupon! Pick one up from your local vendor today.

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WAYS TO SUPPORT
1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
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3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropiate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

PACKAGE PRICING

Three Months/Six Issues: **15%** off
Six Months/Twelve Issues: **25%** off
Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

ASK YOUR VENDOR

What's the best way to start the day?

Pray and think positive thoughts for your day. — Brian Hargrove, #158

Get up and thank God first. Receive your check; what you receive on your check is your attitude. In order to cash it in, you need to be grateful and joyous!
— Felicia Wilbert #234

Put your feet on the floor.
— Ken Parks, #490

Coffee, water, yoga, meds.
— Jim Clark, #139

Waking up with Folgers in your cup.
— Rose Strickland, #25

Solitude.
— Wayne Sparks, #615

Open your eyes and leap out of bed as if a bolt of lightning hit you! Yoga, Capoeira, breathing, a cigarette, breakfast, coffee, conversation. That's how I do it.
— David Putman, #679

To let go of the past and forget about the future, because the present is always now. — Cindy Gere, #279

Truth or lies: The invader

FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

It was an unusually hot winter in Mississippi the year of 2012. The swimming season started early in April. The lake was crowded with small paddle boats and swimmers. Teressa and her family lived across Lake Wanna from her best friend Mariah. They would often swim together, meeting in the middle. They would race to the marker, the dock that was placed in the middle of the lake. Mariah was obsessed every summer trying to get tanned. You could find them sitting around the trees or laying out on the dock for hours talking and reading the latest "Glamour" magazine.

The first weekend in May, Teressa's family had a cookout at the lake. Her mom would always make fresh sushi; her dad would always fish from Lake Wanna. This year was no different. The lake offered fresh fish, shrimp and crab meat. Their families would cook out all summer long.

Early Monday morning Teressa was feeling ill — her whole body ached, she could barely stand and walk. Her parents rushed her to St. Mary's Hospital. After she arrived, her body started to convulse and she had a seizure. Teressa went into a coma. The doctor informed the family they did not find anything to warrant her illness. They charted every food Teressa ate and every activity she did during the weekend. There was nothing new. They ordered the fish at the lake to be tested. They found amoebas, small invading insects found in raw shellfish. However. Teressa never ate any raw shellfish, her mother explained to the doctor.

June came and she was still in a coma. Her mother prayed all day everyday. Her dad felt helpless; however, he too prayed for a miracle. They spent hours at the hospital, and her best friend Mariah was there every day. Mariah held Teressa's hand, talking to her, anticipating her awakening. During the last week in June the doctors finally discovered what ailed Teressa. It was a bite from a lyme tick. Teressa had contracted it in the grass, maybe sitting by the trees. Her dad had the property exterminated immediately!

Finally during the second week in July Teressa awakened. She was weak and could not walk. The doctor ordered physical therapy, which would last eight weeks. Teressa realized she had been near death; she thanked God for her recovery. She thanked the doctors and everyone for their prayers. Teressa wrote a letter to the Mississippi press informing them of her situation. She wanted to warn everyone of the invasive ticks. Even after one year her body still aches and she still walks with a cane. However Teressa is grateful to be alive. Teressa often tells everyone about her experience, pleading with them to be careful,warning them to check their pets and themselves, and be aware of the invaders in the grass and amongst the trees.

The Scorpion and The Frog

STEVEN
Groundcover vendor No. 668

His enormous flayed toes knuckled the sand as he nictated his membranes at the foamy brown water. Just lazing away the day, distantly grateful he wasn't being licked by some hominid. Someone was next to him. Someone somehow had snuck up on him. There that someone was though, just chillin', looking at the water, his relaxed stinger a distant thought.

"Sup?" asked the scorpion.

"Sup," answered the frog.

They sat in silence for a long while watching the water.

"Sup?" asked the scorpion.

"Sup," answered the frog.

Loquaciously the scorpion made small talk at the frog then asked, "So, uh you gonna go across or what?" In answer the frog lazily blinked his huge eyelids.

"No, but seriously I'm tryin' to get across here," said the scorpion to the silent frog, trying like hell to not sound like a scorpion.

More silence, then the frog belched loud and clear and spoke, "I mean, yeah, I'm gonna cross here at some point."

Scorpion nonchalantly responded, "Cool, cool." In the same chill tone then asked, "So hey, no rush or anything or whatever but like when you do cross can I hitch a ride with you bro?"

After several long slow blinks, the frog said, "Hitch a ride like on my back? What am I, new? You'll sting me and eat me."

The scorpion, like he invented being offended, cried, "Whoa, whoa, whoa man, what like I'm gonna sting you while we're out on the water? What am I, crazy? I'd drown too man.'"

The frog, as ever slow to respond, sat a bit and said, "Yeah, okay, that makes sense. I'll give you a lift."

Image by Dark-Wayfarer

"Great, fantastic. Thanks, frog!" Then they sat some more. Something roused the frog at some point and he was ready to move. "Alright bro, if we're gonna do this, lets do this," and he shifted his weight.

Scorpion was like, "Cool, cool, let's do this."

Now frog, you understand, is a hell of a swimmer. Top notch, but when the scorpion stung him in the back of the head midstream he faltered. He faltered hard. Even with that burning venom coursing through his simple little brain he still had the wherewithal to ask, "What did you stab me for bro? I thought we're pals? I'm the one swimming here, like WTF?"

The slick dying-ass scorpion said, "I'm a scorpion, you're a frog bro."

This is a parable said to come out of Russian folklore in the early 20th century, though it may hearken back into Persian antiquity as The Scorpion and the Turtle.

Federal cuts to housing vouchers could lead to more homelessness in Washtenaw County

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Everybody I know has, needs, or wants a housing voucher because rent is too damn high! Here in Washtenaw County, officials await the effects from the July bill that will cut funding to Federal Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), jeopardizing those who have vouchers now, and leaving thousands unhoused in Washtenaw County.

A 43% cut to voucher programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would equate to a more than a $12 million loss for the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, Jennifer Hall, the commission's executive director told Washtenaw County officials during a Wednesday, July 2, working session, as reported by MLive.*

The housing commission estimated it would have to terminate 916 vouchers. "I want to make sure you're aware of that, because it will be a major increase in homelessness if that is what happens, and it is going to affect all of your jurisdictions, particularly the urban core, City of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti city, Ypsilanti Township, Superior Township," Hall is reported to have said.

"And we're only one housing agency in our county; there are others that have vouchers here," she added.

The housing commission expects to get direction from HUD now that the federal cuts for fiscal year 2026, also known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill," have been signed into law by President Trump. When Hall was interviewed by the Ann Arbor News/MLive, she said she is monitoring news from various professional organizations on the subject.

According to the Associated Press, more than 1 million low-income households — most of them working families with children — who depend on the nation's public housing and Section 8 voucher programs could be at risk of losing their government-subsidized homes under the Trump administration's proposal to impose a two-year time limit on rental assistance. (In other words, people receiving voucher-based assistance would only be allowed to stay in the housing for two years.) That over-one-million figure is according to new research from New York University, obtained exclusively by The Associated Press, which suggests the time restriction could affect as many as 1.4 million households.

The NYU report also raises concerns about the largely untested policy, as most of the limited number of local housing authorities that have voluntarily tried the idea eventually abandoned the pilots. "If currently assisted households are subject to a two-year limit, that would lead to enormous disruption and large administrative costs" for public housing authorities, the report said, adding that once the limit was up, housing authorities "would have to evict all of these households and identify new households to replace them."

Elderly and disabled people would be exempt, but there's little guidance from the agency on how time-limited housing assistance would be implemented — how it would be enforced, when the clock starts and how the exemptions would be defined. There is also a wide range of classifications of competency within the category of "disabled." Will this result in expensive and time-consuming efforts to prove acceptable levels of disability for housing assistance?

There are eight million Americans who are one paycheck away from becoming homeless. Since 2020, Washtenaw County has seen an overall increase in homelessness of almost 20%. The Point-in-Time Count is a federally mandated accounting of homelessness organized by the Washtenaw Housing Alliance and the Office of Community and Economic Development. As discussed in previous articles in Groundcover News, the PIT count is a necessary, but incomplete attempt to understand the size of homelessness in a county. Literal counts of unsheltered and sheltered homelessness must be extrapolated to get a more realistic number.

A 2023 review conducted by the Wash-tenaw County Continuum of Care indicated that 266 individuals were experiencing homelessness, a 15% rise since 2022. The 2024 Point in Time Count identified 330 people experiencing homelessness, a 24% increase from the previous year. In just the last year Michigan's eviction rate has also risen nearly 5%.

The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County was established in 1982, and is the primary provider of services and emergency shelter for over 1300 Washtenaw County individuals each year. SAWC operates out of the Robert J. Delonis Center in downtown Ann Arbor. SAWC works with a diverse range of people struggling with homelessness, including first-time homeless people, veterans, domestic violence survivors, and people battling substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Services are offered through their core programs: Residential, Non-Residential/Shelter Diversion, Pathways Program, Recuperative Care, Rotating Shelter, Housing Crisis Stabilization, and Winter Programs.

At the Delonis Center, SAWC has an onsite kitchen run by Food Gatherers and a free medical clinic run by Packard Health. SAWC offers hope to those living on the street with a myriad of services designed to give people the dignity they deserve including showers, access to storage, laundry, and an address to receive mail. Their programs and services address immediate and long-term client needs through case management, community referrals, and on-site basic needs with the goal of sustainable housing.

Their Residential Program offers beds to 58 individuals. Their Shelter Diversion program can assist an additional 100 individuals at a time. Their Recuperative Care program offers 12 beds at a time for individuals experiencing homelessness discharging from local hospitals with an ongoing medical need. In the cold months, the SAWC serves an additional 500 to 750 people in their cold-weather warming center and offers survival and warmth from the coldest winter months. The Delonis warming center clients, along with all the other clients, receive an array of support that helps them move into safe, permanent housing. The end goal is ending homelessness, one person at a time, and to work with the community to allocate the necessary resources to provide housing and support based on the Housing First Model.

The Delonis Center will also, separately, be affected by federal funding cuts. They could lose $700,000 from their $4 million budget, potentially reducing much-needed services for the unhoused in Washtenaw County.

As a cab driver in 2017, I was unhoused and received my Section 8 voucher. The reason I received a voucher is because I was court-ordered to pay child support and could not afford to pay rent and child support at the same time. Now, I and millions of other low-income tenants are wondering whether or not we are going to lose our housing voucher. And those who are on the waiting list for permanent housing from the federal housing program will be left chronically homeless. To be considered chronically homeless, one has to be unhoused for one year or more, but the truth is, it often takes several years to receive a federal housing voucher.

The two year limitation on federal housing vouchers for rental assistance, in my opinion and experience with different housing agencies, will be an administrative disaster. These housing agencies are too small, under-staffed, and in some cases incompetent to handle a turnover every two years.

When people suffer in poverty, they usually don't escape poverty in as little time as two years. And the expense and disruption of relocating will further stress financial resources. The two year limitation could mean that those with Section 8 housing vouchers become unhoused again, thus increasing the number of unhoused people in Washtenaw County.

*The budget that passed in the House of Representatives was more hopeful than the President's initial FY26 proposed budget, but still implements work requirements and large admin cuts.

Let Freedom Ring

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. And to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

I made this pledge every morning in elementary school. The name of my school was "Little Britain" and it was located next to the military base I grew up on. I believed in that.

I also grew up on Saturday morning cartoons — Superman, fighting for truth, justice and the American way. Captain America, whose theme song was: "When Captain America throws his mighty shield, all those who chose to oppose his shield must yield! If he's led to a fight and a duel is due then the red and the white and the blue will come through when Captain America throws his mighty shield!" I believed in that, too.

I was born on July 3rd. Every year, the celebration of the most important day in America's history seared itself with explosions and flashes of light into my little nervous system. To me it was a celebration of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Again, I believed in that. The American flag was my symbol. I believed that America was in fact the land of the free and the home of the brave. I believed this land was your land and this land was my land. I believed my country was the sweet land of liberty. But then my American Dream ended. In college, I woke up. I learned about whose land this actually was, who this land was stolen from and how. I learned that the land of opportunity meant people had the opportunity to own slaves. I learned that America meant being a bully and making a buck at any cost. But I was raised to be a patriot. Dissent is the highest form of patriotism. It is the duty of the free people to crush a government when it becomes oppressive. That day is here.

As a service worker for the homeless, I found myself one day in a situation that taught me something very important. My friends and I were cleaning up a site where a man had been camped on his own property. The property was taken from him by Pittsfield Township on a tax technicality. He was behind on his taxes. They seized his home and sold it to Habitat for Humanity. I'll just leave that irony right there for you to savor. It gets worse. The man was African American, survivor of three strokes which left his mental capacity very compromised, and a veteran. He was supposed to be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Constitution.

America, from sea to shining sea, abandoned a man who fought for his country. In the rubble of his remaining property, there was an American flag. It was on the ground and covered in garbage. Some of my friends wanted to burn it. That last stitch of patriotism in me wanted to protect it. I told them my story of elementary school, and the military base, and the Saturday morning cartoons. But then my "paradigm was shifted" again.

One of my friends was Palestinian. She told me what the flag meant to her. You see, our great nation has been attacking her country — her home — relentlessly — via the weapons America sells to Israel ($7.4 billion worth. Read about it in The Guardian, Feb. 7, 2025). To her the flag meant the death of her neighbors and their children, the decimation of her generational family home, and the horror of the extermination of her people. The American flag to her was the same as the Nazi flag to me — the symbol of an evil empire. When she told me her story, I swallowed hard.

(The next paragraph is slightly fictionalized for sensitive reasons). Recently I saw a YouTube video of a delightful barbecue and bonfire in what seemed to be an average American backyard. There were American flags lining the bonfire pit. Flash back to the 80s when Gregory Lee Johnson burned an American flag to protest the policies of then-President Ronald Reagan.

For many, Reagan was the Conservative's president; his flag represented freedom and comfort. Back then I really didn't understand the politics of the time so when I saw the flag burning, I thought he was a traitor. I saw the flag burning on the news in Middle Eastern countries and in my naivety couldn't understand why they were so mad at us.

Flash forward to a few days ago. The people in the video start burning the flags. I had a visceral reaction. What was happening to my patriotism? You see, I was one of the people in the video. At that moment I had to come to terms with something. The flag today means something different than the flag I grew up with. It doesn't represent truth and justice like I thought it did.

That notion was burned away.

Then something weird happened. All of a sudden I wanted to be okay with it. I wanted to let go of my childhood innocence and nostalgia. I searched my heart and found something that did the trick. I am a middle aged white male. The flag has always served me and my demographic. Meanwhile, it has been the symbol of oppression for the rest of the world. I cannot support that. What I realized was that the American flag, the Stars and Stripes, Old Glory, represents my white male privilege. It represents capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy and white privilege. Most of all, the American flag has become a symbol of hate. Let it burn in the fires of revolution and reclamation. Let it burn, let it burn, let it burn.

I still maintain my identity as an American. I believe that truth and justice, that the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, are FOR EVERYONE. I believe that We the People are mandated to overthrow oppressive regimes, just like we did in Nazi Germany. Just like we need to do now.

There is one American icon I still believe in. She is the enigmatic symbol of the tension between oppressive nationalism and universal human rights. She is Lady Liberty. The Roman Goddess of freedom; her statue bears a poem that may serve as an epitaph for capitalism and oppressive nationalism.

"A New Colossus"
by Emma Lazarus 1849 - 1887

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, *the homeless*, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

To the Ancient Land of the bourgeoisie and the ruling class — keep your racism, your oppression, your xenophobia, and your hate. Keep your "storied pomp." I stand with the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. I stand with those you choose to rob and murder. I stand with Palestine. I stand with Ukraine and Cuba. I stand with your own children, the Street Community and the homeless. I stand with the Pride Community, the Native Community and the People of Color. I stand with the ones you betray; the women, the workers and even your own warriors. As a new nation rises under the collapse of the old, I will pledge my allegiance to the Goddess of Freedom. Bring your torch, my Lady, for our nation has failed.

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Undercover art intel: Poetry as art

Shawn Swoffer was born in Detroit and moved to Washtenaw County at the age of one. Shawn told me she lived here till the age of six when her family moved to California. She lived in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. She told me she loved California. At the age of 14 she moved back to Ypsilanti.

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

"Stars" by Shawn Swoffer
As i look into the
Darkness of night i look
Into the stars as i do
So i think to myself
What a wonderful life.

Shawn loved writing in junior high school because a group of four friends loved the music scene and came together to put a rock and roll band together. They dubbed Shawn the band writer of songs. She got right to work writing songs for this band, and this is where she discovered her writing talent. She told me "... words just flowed out of me with no effort at all."

Feelings by Shawn Swoffer
Feelings so strong and
True but so bold
My feelings for you
Are like a tornado this
Love is true its got
You right where i want
You true love you you
Are like an angle from
Heaven above

She found another way to write: posting to online dating sites to show love with poems to love interests. She told me, "I love writing romantically with love poems. My partner, Big Bird, gives me the most inspiration and encourages me to continue writing. I love writing poetry. It's a wonderful way to express myself and feel good about myself to the world."

Groundcover News gives many people like Shawn the opportunity to show the world the kind of talent that is out there.

Shawn told me in the next five years she hopes to make a small booklet like other artists have done and sell them to the public. She also said, "My personal wisdom to new poets is don't give up, be determined to work hard at it and give peace of mind."

Love is the most powerful emotion that unites people and takes them from the brink of war to transcend time and space. Love mends broken hearts. It takes an artist like Shawn Swoffer to tell all of us love wins in the end.

Something new

MONIQUE CALDWELL
Groundcover contributor

The sun rose up on a quieter sky,
No rush, no race, just clouds drifting by.
A breath of morning, soft and wide— Love stirred gently, no need to hide.

We'd both been weathered by yesterday's rain,
Carried old stories, patches of pain.
But this was different—your smile said so.
Like spring deciding it's time to grow.

Hand in hand, not chasing fate, We walked together, slow and straight.
Each word we spoke was brave and true— A tender start.
Just me and you.

So here we are, the page so wide,
A fresh beginning, side by side. Love that listens, love that stays— And welcomes all our better days.

Celebrating all of life's good from Jesus

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

The world needs more love and more appreciation and celebration of Jesus
The world needs more and more food banks and shelters for people who don't have much
The world needs more and more love and the world needs more and more care
Every day and every season and every holiday the world needs to celebrate Jesus and all people
This poem is written with care to everyone

Stay true to you

EMERI JADE BEY
Groundcover vendor No. 660

Elegant, like a ball gown gliding across the dancefloor.

Moorish American, balancing work and play.

Elevation, to where I need to be.

Resilient when bad things come my way.

Individual, staying true to myself and progressing everyday.

Keep it real

TERESA BASHAM
Groundcover vendor No. 570

You don't wanna see,
What choo do ta me,
You don't care,
How you make me feel,
Thee strugglez I bear,
I do it alone,
You don't wanna see,
So I alwayz kneel,
Keep it real,
Lord knowz my heart,
Wantin that unconditional love,
I only find it in my father in heaven,
People don't care about,
Anyone or anythang but themselvez.

community **EVENTS**

YPSI FOOD FESTIVAL
Saturday, August 9 | 12:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Downtown Ypsilanti, University Bank Commerce Center, 301 W Michigan Ave.
A delicious day packed with:
- Mouthwatering food from local vendors & food trucks — including vegan and vegetarian options!
- DJ to keep the vibes high
- Family-friendly games and activities for all ages
- A joyful celebration of community, culture, and small business
- Whether you're craving BBQ, soul food or something plant-based and fresh — they've got your plate covered. FREE ENTRY. All ages welcome. Tons of fun guaranteed.

A2 FOOD TRUCK RALLY AT THE MARKET!
Wednesday, August 20, 5-8 p.m.
Ann Arbor Farmers Market
Your favorite food trucks, carts and pop-ups plus live music!

A2ZERO MONTHLY CLOTHING SWAPS
August 21, 4-7 p.m.
Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St.
These are a perfect way to give your gently used clothes a new home, and you might just find an item of clothing you have been looking for, without having to buy it new. Each person can bring up to five items of clothing in good condition. Accessories are also welcome. You can take clothing without bringing anything, or bring clothing without taking anything. Hosted by the Office of Sustainability and Innovations.

ICPJ ALTERNATIVES to VIOLENCE PROJECT Basic Workshop
Friday, August 15, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Nadine Hoover & Melaine Siaw facilitating. This barebones, basic workshop is focused on transforming our personal lives and interpersonal patterns; it fulfills the basic participation requirement for the advance workshop and can be done as a refresher or a first time basic.

Advanced Workshop
August 16 - 17, Saturday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Nadine Hoover & Melaine Siaw lead facilitating, Maryam Ashraf & Jaye Starr apprenticing. Focuses on transforming our public lives and social patterns.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: email info@icpj.org for form. Co-sponsored by Ann Arbor Quaker Meeting Friends Peace & Justice Committee, the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, Friends Peace Teams, and AVP Michigan.

A2 LOCAL FOOD FESTIVAL
Thursday, August 28, 2025, 5-8 p.m.
Ann Arbor Farmers Market, 315 Detroit Street
This free public festival showcases farms, food makers and local organizations focused on growing a strong and sustainable local food system. Festival-goers will learn about the benefits of local and sustainably grown food, eat delicious local food, participate in fun and educational activities, and enjoy music.

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Cindy Durrah: Rebel without a pause

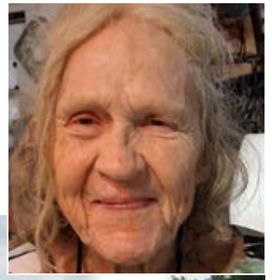
TOMMY SPAGHETTI
Groundcover vendor No. 669

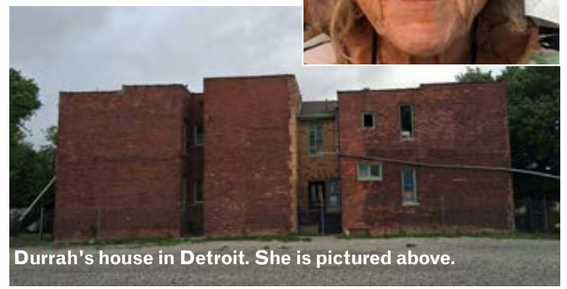
If you have lived in Detroit for any time you might know Cindy Durrah. If you work in the city you may have seen her as she gets around aplenty. She might be considered a thorn in the side of city council and bureaucrats. She is a housing activist who has attended more city council meetings than even the mayor. Rumor is: she holds the record.

In the 1970s Cindy paddled across the Detroit River on a raft made from a door. A door that became available after Detroit demolished its first abandoned house.

Cindy believes that home demolition is bad policy and I agree wholeheartedly. We all know the economic forces that created the problem in Detroit. WHITE FLIGHT is what it has been called. The official word denoting the evacuation of Detroit is: Mass. Over a million residents fled to the suburbs after the 1967 riots — riots that engulfed part of the city in flames. I was only five years old when it happened and was living in the sparsely populated suburban enclave called Livonia. I have no visual memory of the riots but I do recall my mother using the term "race-riot." From 1968-2000, Detroit experienced the largest exodus in human history, perhaps. White people moving to the 'burbs.' Fueled by fear, enticed by greedy realtors, the movement began in earnest, leaving a tax-depleted city center along with 250,000 abandoned homes.

I digress. This article is about Cindy, who I adore because of who she is and what she represents. Cindy is a survivor. At 81 years of age she is still active and belongs on my list of Octogenerians Who Rock! Cindy was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1941, and I forgot what she told me about her parents so I will ask her again. I'm hoping to keep this article going as a series. If you read this far and I kept your interest then perhaps you will purchase the upcoming editions of Groundcover.





Durrah's house in Detroit. She is pictured above.

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am–8pm Daily
Hang out in any of our five locations across town, browsing books, magazines, newspapers, and more, or check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, and home tools—you name it! Study and meeting rooms, fast and free WiFi, and plenty of places to sit and hang out

Public Computers
The AADL has public-access internet computers available for use by both cardholders and non-cardholders at all five locations. Each station has USB ports, headphone jacks, and some of the fastest wifi speeds in town!

Byte Club
An exclusive club for AADL SUPER FANS and library people like you! Byte Club will help you connect deeper with the Library you know and love, and share special sneak peeks of new things coming soon. Ready to join? Visit aadl.org/byteclub to get started.

FEATURED EVENT

Sunday, August 24 • 12-3 PM • Downtown Library
Let's take the Summer Game out with a bang with a building-wide puzzle, badge coloring, badge button making, face painting, and more! Use your remaining Summer Game points to bid for special items in our auction!

Avalon Housing Ypsi complex breaks ground, community benefits will follow despite expiration

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

There's construction happening on Washington Street in Ypsilanti. It's been a long time coming, and it's expected to have a long-term benefit.

On January 1, 2017, the 16-unit apartment building managed by Stewart Beal at 206 N. Washington caught fire. Not long after, the Wash-tenaw County Treasurer foreclosed the burned-out multi-unit structure following the owner's nonpayment of taxes and failure to make an estimated $1.5 million in repairs.

In July 2019, the City of Ypsilanti City Council voted 7 to 0 to approve purchasing 206 N. Washington from the County Treasurer with its "Right of First Refusal" for $101,977 — using a combination of $75,000 from Ypsi's Affordable Housing Fund and $26,977 from Ypsi's Dangerous Buildings Escrow Fund.

In March 2020, eight months after the City's purchase, the City Economic Development Director requested that the City release a Request for Proposals for affordable housing development. On September 15 of that year, Ypsilanti City Council approved the proposal from Avalon Housing. The only other proposal was from the Ypsilanti Housing Commission.

On February 2, 2023, Avalon made a formal request for a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT): 4% of total shelter rents for the next 50 years. Working with the City Assessor, staff estimated the tax to be $55,615 per year without a PILOT, which makes the total value of the tax break incentive $2.38 million. Shelter rents proposed are $750 at 22 units for a total of $198,000, so the payment instead of taxes would be $7,920 annually. However, the City will collect a portion, not all, of this payment instead of taxes.

Due to Ordinance No. 1325 (passed in 2018), when a developer is requesting public support in the form of a financial incentive — such as a tax break — or in the form of the sale or lease of city-owned land, the developer must offer substantial community benefits. Residents of Ypsilanti are nominated then appointed by City Council for an ad-hoc committee to discuss and negotiate potential community benefits.

Over six months the Community Benefits Agreement Committee met four times in public meetings to produce the agreement below. It was put before a public hearing and approved by Ypsi City Council on December 5, 2023.

206 N Washington St.'s Community Benefits

The approved Community Benefits Agreement requires Avalon to abide by the following ten agreements:

1. Avalon will affirmatively market the units at 206 N. Washington St. so that populations that often find it difficult to obtain affordable and supportive housing will have access to these units including seniors and others identified, in the Project's Affirmative Fair Marketing Housing Plan.
2. Avalon will affirmatively market and prioritize supportive housing units at 206 N. Washington St. to previously incarcerated individuals, consistent with the local Coordinated Entry process.
3. Avalon will lose the PILOT on an individual unit for a year if the tenant has an income that exceeds 60% area median income.
4. Avalon will commit itself to continuing its mission throughout the duration. Avalon's mission to build healthy, safe and inclusive supportive housing communities as a long-term solution to homelessness.
5. Avalon will collaborate with community partners to offer appropriate programs that are available to the wider community in the community room at 206 N. Washington St.
6. Avalon shall commit to Green Standards included in its County HOME agreement and in its MSHDA agreement, including Enterprise Green Communities and/or National Green Building Standards.
7. Should an excess of funding exist after the project is complete, then Avalon will use any additional funds to add renewable components to the building (solar, etc.).
8. Avalon agrees to assist its residents in acquiring a residential street parking pass, with proof of vehicle ownership.
9. Avalon will install a bench in the front of the property.
10. Avalon will maximize the use of the historic outbuildings for community benefit as space permits, subject to historic district restrictions, if any.

The City of Ypsilanti is required to do the following:

1. Maintain the 4% PILOT on 206 N. Washington St. for the length of this agreement.
2. Amend Chapter 58 of the Human Relations Commission to further focus on housing affordability and accessibility; however, failure of the City to amend Chapter 58 shall not limit the project's ability to receive a PILOT.
3. Readopt a Community Benefits Ordinance; however, failure of the City to readopt a Community Benefits Ordinance shall not limit the project's ability to receive a PILOT.

Yes, the 2018 Community Benefits Ordinance that made this whole process possible has expired. Working sessions are happening now to reinstate another CBO.

206 N Washington St. before demolition.

Avalon Housing's development will provide 22 units of affordable housing and supportive services. Rendering provided by Avalon.

Construction timeline

In late June the construction began and by July the building was completely demolished. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2026 — when the CBA will officially go into effect.

206 N Washington St. will provide 22 units of affordable housing; all of the units are 1-bedroom units, and eight of the units are set aside for people exiting homelessness. Everyone living at 206 N. Washington will have access to support services such as case management, crisis support and medical care to help overcome any challenges they face in staying housed.

Much of the CBO research for this article was compiled by Kat Layton, a member of the 206 N. Washington Community Benefits Agreement Committee.

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Hear Me Out: Ann Arbor needs a real day center

LIT KURTZ
Groundcover vendor No. 159

For years, people navigating housing instability in Ann Arbor have relied on what might best be described as a patchwork of "daytime" options — public libraries, coffee shops, transit centers and the occasional warming space. These are stopgaps, not solutions. While the library and other public spaces have tried to provide a refuge, none of them offer what a dedicated day center could: safety, stability and the resources needed to help people move forward.

The library was never designed to be a solution for those navigating housing crises. At best people are shuffled in and out, often without a quiet place to rest, meet with a caseworker, or simply warm up in the winter or cool down in the summer. Staff are stretched thin, and tensions flare when patrons' needs go beyond books and Wi-Fi. This isn't necessarily the library's fault, but rather the city's failure to create a space where people can exist without being treated as problems to be managed.

A real day center would fill these gaps. It would offer showers, lockers, basic health services, job and housing navigation, and a stable place to connect with outreach workers. More importantly, it would acknowledge that people have the right to exist — even when they aren't shopping, working or otherwise performing for the comfort of those around them.

Instead, the city continues to rely on makeshift solutions. Temporary cooling centers open and close unpredictably. Community spaces like churches may open their doors for a few hours but can't meet the sustained needs of people living without stable housing. These piecemeal measures leave hundreds of residents with no predictable place to go — forcing them to wander, endure extreme weather, or risk trespassing charges just for trying to rest.

Ann Arbor prides itself on being progressive, but without a functioning day center, the city is failing its most vulnerable residents. As someone who has experienced this firsthand, I know how exhausting it is to be displaced hour by hour, day after day. The city must prioritize funding and partnerships for a permanent, year-round day center — not just as a charity gesture, but as a matter of public health and basic human dignity.

Until then, the library and other public spaces will continue to bear the burden of a crisis they were never meant to solve. It's time for Ann Arbor to step up.

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Special election results

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Both proposals regarding the development of the Library Lot passed with 58% approval in the City of Ann Arbor's August 5 special election. The election had a low 24% voter turnout.

PROPOSAL A: Amendment to authorize the transfer of City owned property to the Ann Arbor District Library

• Authorizes the City to sell the Library Lane Parking Structure, to the AADL for the purpose of building a mixed-use development that includes additional library services, housing, retail and programmable open public space.
• Does not authorize new taxes.

PROPOSAL B: Amendment to repeal Section 1.4 of the City Charter

• Repeals the "Center of the City" section of the City Charter, which mandates that the city-owned land bounded by Fifth Ave., and William, Division and Liberty Streets be permanently retained in public ownership, and repeals the land designation as an urban park and civic center commons.

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Reimagining Walden, part two: this time it's personal

ANTHONY SMITH
Groundcover contributor

Continued from "Reimagining Walden, a loathing," the June 27, 2025 edition of Groundcover News, p. 10

It was good advice the Indian gave me when he said "Watch Scotty."

In the most underhanded ways Scott showed his true colors while I was asleep after a long hard day's work. I had washed up and eaten and collapsed, and I'd only been asleep for a few hours when I was "a-baconed" (the experience of being woken up by police of some kind) by the Sheriff's Department.

Scott had waited till I was out cold and then made up a story about how I said I was going to kill his dogs and invited the cops in with the story that everything in the house that was illegal was mine. The truth is that he had paid for everything even remotely left-handed. I would learn that one cannot subpoena credit card records in Michigan, which is interesting. The sheriff and narcs of lawnet, who are low IQ scumbags, bungled the whole thing in conjunction with the shortbus riders of the Livingston County prosecutor's office; I wouldn't know anything about this for several more years to come. At the time of the incident I was just a poor guy sleeping on a couch working for a jerk who would try to put me away and not pay me for my work! **ALL** that was actually mine was just some clothes.

I didn't have what is known in the fast-paced and competitive field of professional drug dealing as "Constructive possession." This refers to a drug possession case where one doesn't have physical possession of whatever substance is being traded in.

It's all about "Dominion and Control," and so far as "the Oklahoma crack house statues," they state one must "keep and maintain" a crack house in order to be in charge of a crack house. One could conceivably have a "crack jetski" or "crack yurt" so long as some kind of drug is for sale, mostly. And there was keeping and maintaining going on, but "i be's in the trap lmfao."

I had turned a blind eye to many things and let it all go too long, because I thought Scott was a good guy at first. I trusted him, but it was all a scam. I'm not a sucker — I thought at one point I had an okay job, then my car messed up and I was stuck and I couldn't leave. Try telling that to a judge. I had no money and no transportation. None of the parasites who used to hang around were anywhere to be found when I needed a friend.

At the time I was counting on a job. I wanted to learn plumbing and electric in more detail. I ended up driving a degenerate Satanist to do drug deals and get hookers, and the minute I wanted off the BS bus Scott set me up with the police. If the officers involved were in any way competent it would have been obvious I hadn't done it. The War on Drugs doesn't care about people — it needs bodies to feed the beast. The whole shitshow in Livingston County — the damn county is essentially a dry county compared to Washtenaw. However, they do pass out Suboxone in jail as if junkies need to stay hooked. I fortunately did eat some in jail and got high off it lol. Drugs make jail suck less. Livingston damn County has NO dispensaries in sight, but keep the job security going with the Suboxone in medical! I know, let's give meth to the trailer parks? I watched the medical recipients of Suboxone come in and out every single day.

On the 18th of August, 2020, Raymond Scott Myers thought he could get me hauled off that night.

The Sheriff's office in many places sucks less than the respective police departments do in Michigan, aka FEMA region 5.

Sheriffs themselves are Constitutionally elected directly by the people, unlike the police departments. President Washington was correct in warning about standing armies, and the militarization of law enforcement that occured in the last century will be hard to undo. If things like COVID, the National Firearms Act, and the Hurricane Katrina door-to-door gun confiscation have taught us anything, it is that the enforcers of the Zionist Occupation Government will walk all over the rights of the American people if it means that they can keep their pensions, and they will do it using guns paid for by money stolen out of the paychecks of the hardworking taxpayers. In the surrounding FEMA region 5, Orwellian big brother stuff has already crept all across the nation.

Many people don't know income tax was only supposed to be a temporary measure: it was intended to fund World War I, a war many Americans really really wanted to fight.

Our tax dollars have funded incinerating children in Waco Texas, and they have lovingly dropped herbicides on toddlers in the third world whose only crime was being born into families of coca and marijuana farmers.

I wasn't born into it; it was Magic Mushrooms that drew me into my unfortunate stint with Scott. A life-changing sum of money will motivate most people. My employer, blind Scotty, ended up owing me about $5,000. The deputy that showed up couldn't get me paid — or wouldn't. However, he tried to get me to tell on myself and then proceeded to jump on my case. I wouldn't learn about this though till years later. In the meantime I was legally ripped off by a conman who used the cops as a way to cheat me out of my wages.

Really, it was one of the worst experiences of my life. I've been ripped off so many times by predatory jerks. There are tons of corrupt, loophole-type laws that never seem to favor the poor and always seem to enable scumbags like Scott, and shady innkeepers at pay-by-the-week motels, or owners of the apartments with rents that were higher than the house payment a bank told me I couldn't afford.

The next day, I availed myself of the "bacon bastards" (police) protection so I had this on my mind. I hadn't seen it coming, but my Indian friend certainly had, telling me, "I told you big guy," when I lamented my situation. In truth, Scotty literally did this to several people a year.

The old Indian saved me next. He let me bring my clothes over, and I turned over some of the equipment. I was able to clear a few bucks from the tubs and stuff because they could potentially also be used for herpetology. My friend's son-in-law bred reptiles, so I stole them from the supplies I helped myself to and I limped my poor Jeep across the street.

What happened was an extra sort of funny and if you wanted to see a worm squirm more vigorously you'd have to flip over a rock on a sunny day and then drop the slimy guy on an ant hill.

Scott was angry and afraid that the old Indian was going to help me, so he told every one of their mutual friends that he had found a bag full of IDs and passports based on them and various names, like I was some kind of Jason Bourne Secret Agent Man. His ridiculous stories got nowhere and over the next few days the old Indian and I got my Jeep up on jack stands and made a plan to fix it. It turned out he'd been a jet mechanic in the Marines and would help me get my Jeep back on the road if I helped him move some fence sections around that he was painting. Still, it was a kind of 19th century barter for work and meals. One compares America today to the young land of liberty that Thoreau knew when he lived for a time at Walden and canoed up the nearby river; in his day, whisky, furs and lots of stuff, even old nails pried off of boards, traded hands.

The issues faced by me in 2020 can be juxtaposed with what my great-grandfather faced. Herbert James Adams, of the line of John and John Quincy Adams, both early American presidents and important figures in the American Revolution, came of age in a much different America than I live in today.

My paw paw, as I called him, was a barely literate Southern Illinois hillbilly.

According to my great grandmother Inez Von Braden, my grandfather had a job in the auto industry. He moved from Marion, Ill., to sunny 54 West Hopkins in Pontiac, Mich., and got a lifelong job working for Fisher Body. When he was about 100 the UAW paper

see **WALDEN** next page ➡

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Respect the hustle

PEDRO CAMPOS
Groundcover vendor No. 652

It's hard to describe homelessness to someone who hasn't lived it. People think it's just about sleeping on the streets — but really, it's about surviving without safety, privacy or dignity. It's about feeling invisible in the middle of a crowd, and sometimes hunted when all you want is peace. I've lived this life in two cities: Ann Arbor, and New York City.

What I share here isn't policy analysis or academic research — it's my truth. These are the cold nights I spent walking to the shelter — the hot subway cars where I dozed between stops, the meals I was thankful for, and the times I was robbed of both belongings and hope. These are also the moments of unexpected humanity, the volunteers who knew my name, the social workers who do believe, and the quiet strength I found in myself to stay clean and keep going.

This is a comparative view—not just of cities — but of how we treat our most vulnerable. What works, what fails, and how each city's spirit seeps into the lives of those with nowhere to go.

Help That Matters

Ann Arbor offered very little support — no help with getting cash assistance, some EBT Food Stamps help, and no consistent guidance. Churches and volunteers were the only ones who really seemed to care.

In New York, I had a case manager from day one. I received EBT, a small cash benefit, and access to employment and housing specialists. For all the system's flaws, I finally felt like someone had my back.

Eating to Survive: In Ann Arbor, food came with dignity. The Delonis Center served hot homemade meals twice a day, and St. Andrew's Church offered reliable, nourishing breakfasts. But outside those walls, food security vanished in my experience. Groceries are expensive, and restaurants rarely showed compassion.

New York flipped that. Shelter food was often bland and insufficient; but out on the street, I could hustle up enough for a $1 slice of pizza or a smoothie from a bodega that accepted EBT. You learn to get creative fast when your next meal depends on it. There are also food trucks all over the city with all kinds of food for a reasonable price.

Strings-attached shelter: Ann Arbor only had one main shelter. Many people sleep outside, even during Michigan's brutal winters. I met people who had been homeless for over six years, still waiting for housing that will never come. The system feels random — monthly checks are made by housing staff to confirm your story, but there is little transparency and few results.

In New York, things were more structured. After a two-month intake process, I was assigned a case manager and introduced to programs like Housing Connect, CityFHEPS, and 2010E, this last one for people with special needs. The waiting is still taking months, but there was at least a sense of progress.

Yet both cities shared one tragic similarity: shelters are never truly safe.

I can't overstate the role drugs play in the lives of the unhoused — whether you use them or not. In both Ann Arbor and New York, alcohol, meth, crack and heroin are everywhere. Inside shelters, I saw people shoot up in bathrooms, trade pills like currency, and overdose more times than I can count. Sometimes it was the staff looking the other way — or worse, involved.

For those trying to stay sober, it's like walking through fire. Even if you don't use, you still suffer: the fights, the thefts, the paranoia. Loud arguments in the middle of the night. Unwashed bodies packed into dorm rooms. The constant begging. You try to stay clean, keep a job, stay on track — but it wears you down. Even people who've never touched drugs are forced to live in environments shaped by addiction and untreated trauma. There's no way to build a stable life when every day is a test of endurance.

Healthcare: Medical care was solid in both cities — thanks to state Medicaid — but psychiatric care often felt like punishment. In Ann Arbor, mental health support was cold and oppressive. In New York, things have been impersonal, but the doctors are surely better prepared for the job and that is evident from their treatments. They are still abusive in my opinion, but as long as I'm psychiatrist-free, that doesn't matter so much to me.

The hustle: Jobs existed in both cities, but homelessness makes it hard to keep one. In Ann Arbor, you can beg for money and food, but vending on the street is banned without a license. Even bottle returns were limited — 10 cents per bottle, but only certain ones.

In New York, the hustle is a way of life. Street vending, gig work, bottle collecting — even water bottles count here, though only 5 cents each. I do many things to make some money, mostly informal work, but it is work. And it made me feel human again.

The Vibe: Ann Arbor still holds a special place in my heart. It's quiet, surrounded by nature, and full of kind souls. People at Groundcover News gave me a voice. The University of Michigan is beautiful with its buildings all over town. Church basements turned into sanctuaries. I miss it — not just the place, but the sense of community. But it's also a place where being poor makes you invisible. It's clean and cultured, but reserved.

New York, by contrast, is blunt and impersonal. People move fast, speak fast, live fast. Everyone's got somewhere to be. But in that rush, there's room for survival. The city doesn't nurture you — but it doesn't ignore you either. There's a kind of respect in the hustle.

Mobility: Ann Arbor is built for cars. If you're on foot, you're mostly stuck downtown. Bikes help, but winter snow makes them unreliable. Ann Arbor uses trespassing aggressively to exclude the homeless. Private businesses, police and racism combine to restrict movement. New York City enforces trespassing less harshly. Police appear more trained, and residents more aware of civil rights.

New York? It's a machine that never sleeps. Trains, buses, ferries, bikes, rideshares — they all run constantly. Even if you're broke, you can still get around. It's like being plugged into the city's bloodstream. The grid of Manhattan becomes second nature. I could wake up in the Bronx and be in Brooklyn before breakfast. I felt like I was everywhere at once — ubiquitous, mobile, alive.

There's something hauntingly beautiful about being in Manhattan. You're never grounded, always moving yet surrounded by everything. Art, music, street life, energy, vibrating. One minute I'm watching a jazz duo in the park, the next I'm walking down Broadway. And that's the paradox — you feel like part of it all, and completely alone. The city doesn't stop, and neither can you.

Other dimensions

Racism & Immigration: Ann Arbor feels more overtly racist, especially from police. As a U.S. citizen raised abroad, I was seen as "other." New York, while more diverse, still had pockets of quiet xenophobia. People would tell me to "go back to your

see **HUSTLE** page 13 ➡

➡ **WALDEN** from previous page

did a story on him being the oldest living UAW member. He lived to be 104.

In his day he could easily afford a decent house, a new car every few years, and my great-grandmother didn't have to work when my grandfather and his brother were very young. It was a different America then, with more opportunities and a higher living standard for the working class.

The old Indian didn't grow up in the United States, he grew up in the jungles of Nicaragua and hunted iguanas many days to feed himself. His upbringing took a big turn in his teens when his aunt used her position as a cook at the Nicaraguan embassy to bring him to Washington D.C. to finish school. He loved America so much he found his way into the Marine Corps as a fighter jet mechanic.

Thanks to him I got the *shadiest* of shade tree mechanic jobs done on my poor poor Jeep. With the aid of strong drink and profanities we were able to remove my front driveshaft and simply use channel locks to bend and crush a few of the brake lines that had been damaged also. I would never again take that Jeep over 50 mph. In the greasy struggle against immobility, innocence would be the first casualty. I was glad all around because I could get to most places around that area simply by taking unpaved backroads. I didn't need the luxury of all four brakes to have a place to stretch out. I was able to store enough of my belongings for a time at my friend's place.

We had fun doing the work, it was a brief period of reflection before time for the next thing. We shared some nice meals and I made sure we got the projects done that my friend wanted to do. Eventually I had to hit the road, so I bid my friend farewell and made my way towards the town I grew up in where I used to have a more stable life and a family home. It was the most glorious time of the year, just before the first hints of cold weather put on the war paint of Indian Summer.

TO BE CONTINUED

from the ARCHIVES

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

Hey buddy, can you spare a dime? Or would you rather buy a paper?

SHELLEY DENEVE
Groundcover vendor No. 22

I want to voice my observations and concerns about the difference between Groundcover News vendors and panhandlers. Why is it so easy for the public just to hand a panhandler money, yet when a Groundcover vendor asks the general population to buy a paper, the same people say, "No thanks"? I want to point out something that happens all too often. As people are walking by, they suddenly are interrupted by a panhandler. While I stand there with papers and watch the people give them money, I think to myself, "Why not buy from me? We are offering news and information in exchange for a $1* donation."

Why are you giving to someone who wants a handout? What do they offer? I feel angry and frustrated when the public chooses them over me. I have talked to other vendors about this. Many of us feel it's unfair and it defeats our purpose. Most initially feel hurt or angry when this happens. For some, it leads to feeling depressed. Others channel their reaction and conclude that the potential patron needs educating about the paper and its purpose, and set about trying to engage the person in conversation.

I sell Groundcover for three reasons. Reason one: I need cash to buy everyday items my family needs, because the amount covered by food stamps isn't enough and both my husband and I are currently unemployed. Reason two: Groundcover is an essential part of our community in that it helps people understand what low-income and homeless people go through. Reason three: I like talking with people and I feel like I'm doing something important while I look for a job.

For the record, Groundcover vendors are not panhandlers. This is a legitimate business! We may not sound as professional as a person with a regular job or higher education. We are just down-to-earth people trying to reestablish ourselves amidst a crisis in our lives. We also are serious about helping the public understand what Groundcover is all about.

It's about helping the community become informed about poverty and homelessness in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and other parts of Washtenaw County. It is also about helping people in a homeless or housing-challenged situation by giving them an opportunity to sell Groundcover instead of asking for a handout. If I were the passerby, I would rather buy the paper from the vendor than just hand someone money. If I were rich, I would make a conscious effort to help both. It's ultimately up to you, the public, how you would like to help. Of course, you are reading this article, so you chose to buy the paper — thank you!

When you give a panhandler money, do you wonder where your money goes? We can only guess, right? When you buy Groundcover from the vendor, it goes to that specific vendor. The vendors buy papers from Groundcover at 25 cents per copy. Then the vendor sells the publication for a dollar. We have to organize, plan and coordinate our sales efforts. We are not just asking for a handout; we are asking for a *hand up* (with the $1.00 donation, of course!). Why do many people say "no thank you" to Groundcover vendors? Does the public think we are like panhandlers? I get that impression a lot!

When I go out and sell Groundcover on the weekends, it is really difficult to sell. I don't know if it's the mindset of the crowd, or because some of the crowd are visitors and feel uncomfortable about buying it. Another crowd I find hard to reach is younger people, whether or not they are students. I know they're busy with school and other activities — but is it partly because they have an agenda to party all night?

I just want to say we need more college-aged people buying Groundcover. You are our future, and this is something that needs your attention. I want to reiterate that Groundcover vendors are legitimate businesspeople.

In conclusion, I appreciate your business and thoroughly enjoy talking with the public. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtful comments on how Groundcover and its vendors are conducting their business. And just to let you know, I can't talk too long since I may miss an opportunity to open another passerby's heart and mind!

*Originally published in the July 2011 edition of Groundcover News. *At the time of publication, Groundcover cost $0.25 to the vendor and was sold on the street for $1.*

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

Is begging a safety issue?

BASTIAN PÜTTER
bodo

bodo: As a sociologist at the University of Wuppertal researching in the field of civil protection, disaster relief and property security, it doesn't strike me immediately that we should discuss begging and homelessness in city centers with you.

Tim Lukas: (laughs) That's true, but as a sociologist, my background is in the sociology of crime and criminology. This field doesn't just deal with major emergencies as the terms "civil protection" and "disaster relief" might suggest; in the case of my research group we also focus on the issue of everyday crime, disorder and sense of security.

bodo: To what extent do homeless or begging people affect safety?

TL: First of all, safety is a basic human need. The actual risk of becoming a victim of crime is only very indirectly linked to the subjective feeling of safety. The latter is strongly characterized by personal experience, media and socio-political discourse. The subjectively perceived fears of criminal attacks and the objective threat posed by people experiencing homelessness are not generally in accordance with each other.

bodo: In your research on dealing with marginalized social groups, you talk about securitization. What do you mean by this?

TL: We are describing a process that reinterprets social problems as safety problems. Begging, including so-called aggressive begging, is first and foremost a symptom of social hardship, a culmination of extreme poverty, perhaps in conjunction with addiction or other problems. The classification of begging as a safety issue instead of an act to be met with compassion is indicative of the need for a change, shifting begging into the field of regulatory policy.

bodo: The city of Dortmund [Germany] wants to regulate so-called "aggressive begging" more strictly and is modelling itself on Aachen's concept, titled "Attractiveness and Safety." This combines marketing ideas for the city with the securitization they describe. What would be the alternative to fines and bans or larger-scale attempts to enforce begging bans?

TL: Firstly, the best idea to reduce the number of people rough sleeping in public spaces is to provide housing. It really is time to transition experimental concepts such as Housing First from pilot phases to reality. We know from numerous evaluations that it is more efficient and much more promising to address the problems of those affected from within their own secure housing. Furthermore, in the context of the above question, this solution relieves the burden on public spaces.

Besides, it is also important to take a closer look at city inhabitants' tolerance thresholds. After all, the city has always been a place of unfamiliarity and part of that is difference, and perhaps even deviant behavior. Removing this would mean abolishing the fabric of the city as such. The public space was and is, among many other things, also a space for impositions, and some things we must simply put up with.

bodo: You don't win local elections by demanding tolerance, do you?

TL: That is true. We have real crises in the centers of major cities, and, at the same time, we are seeing an increasing reluctance to accept such everyday irritations. The political response is then often actually the shift towards regulatory solutions as mentioned. But herein does lie opportunity.

For city centers broadly speaking, the proposals that are put forward often from the conservative viewpoint are neither expedient nor sustainable. As a result of this attention, real thought is, however, being given to solutions. Dortmund has long focussed on suppression, and in essence, these approaches have only exacerbated the problems.

Debates are now emerging about progressive concepts such as the Zurich model for addiction support or alternatives, such as specific areas for people experiencing homelessness and addiction. However, it must also be said that the displacement of vulnerable groups from public spaces is generally not applauded beyond the immediate neighborhood.

bodo: In Dortmund, this does exist, but great efforts are being made to move the drug consumption area out of the city centre. In addition, measures taken by the municipality against people experiencing homelessness and addiction have increased.

TL: Yes, there is this coexistence. The morning wakeups for people sleeping rough in the city centre as well as ban procedures certainly represent this restrictive side, which is traditionally strong in Dortmund. On the other hand, innovative strides have been taken in the creation of a staff structure that is unique to Germany (as far as I know), which we are otherwise only familiar with from major events. The "Public Order and City Life" special task force brings together offices, authorities and social organisations as a structure enabling coordinated action and the integration of different perspectives.

With regards to the demand for the relocation of support centers, this is certainly apparent in Dortmund, amongst other cities. Opponents of these facilities are active in their local areas as well as further afield at planned alternative locations. In Dortmund, we saw this in practice where a large demonstration took place at a proposed location for a drug consumption centre.

bodo: Perhaps it is a question of power and not just location? One of the main drivers for restrictive measures against socially marginalised groups in Dortmund's city centre is the retail industry.

TL: Yes, this is something we also see in other cities. Commercial and retail interest groups act as "moral entrepreneurs," as criminological research calls them. They use their networks in politics and the local media to publicize their demands and, in doing so, drive the shift in discourse towards securitization with the aim of minimizing the visibility of certain social problems.

But I do also see a change in thinking here, as well as in city marketing. There is now a growing realization that social problems cannot be tackled by policing and regulation alone. Openness to concepts such as harm reduction are on the rise, as well as the realization that addiction cannot be combated by suppression alone.

bodo: When talking about safety and public space, the focus of marginalized social groups is usually only as triggers and the object of regulatory measures. The tide is changing in terms of this perspective.

TL: In two research projects in Düsseldorf and Cologne, we analyzed the fears of people experiencing homelessness and addiction. The results showed that criminalization and control create a high degree of instability among a demographic whose living conditions are already characterized by existential fears. As those affected are dependent on the infrastructure of city centers, their displacement from public spaces contradicts their often even greater need for protection.

Safety is just as essential for those affected by homelessness and therefore meaningful discourse on safety must not only include the middle class of mainstream society. I was shocked by the extent of the humiliation, attacks and thefts reported to us by people experiencing homelessness. This perspective also shows the importance of alternative spaces created for rough sleepers.

bodo: Critics would argue that it cannot be about making the city "homeless-friendly" on its own.

TL: Creating such provisions is something that also helps city centers as a whole by means of improving quality of life, creating more greenery and more seating. Where city centre areas are widely and diversely used, visible poverty is just one aspect.

A good illustration of this was during a Future workshop on the Wuppertal railway station area. Here, safety was mentioned as an important wish, and so we filled a flipchart with typical ideas for this: video surveillance, curfews, alcohol bans, more police, more regulation. The participants soon agreed that this would create a total dead zone, and from there, they developed ideas for diverse utilization, including the alternative spaces mentioned above. I think that's a real model!

Translated from German by Naomi Bruce. Courtesy of bodo / INSP.ngo

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➡ **HUSTLE** from page 11

people" — even though this is mine.

Public Spaces & Culture: Ann Arbor has parks and libraries, but they can feel out of reach when you're poor. New York, for all its chaos, has free concerts, open beaches, and library events that feel open to all.

Cleanliness: Ann Arbor is spotless. New York, not so much. Trash, rats and decay are just part of the background. But beauty shines through — sometimes literally in the form of art on a subway wall or a stranger offering a warm coat.

Living homeless in America is not just about being without a home, it's about being without protection, structure, or even a future that feels possible. But each city gave me different tools to fight that.

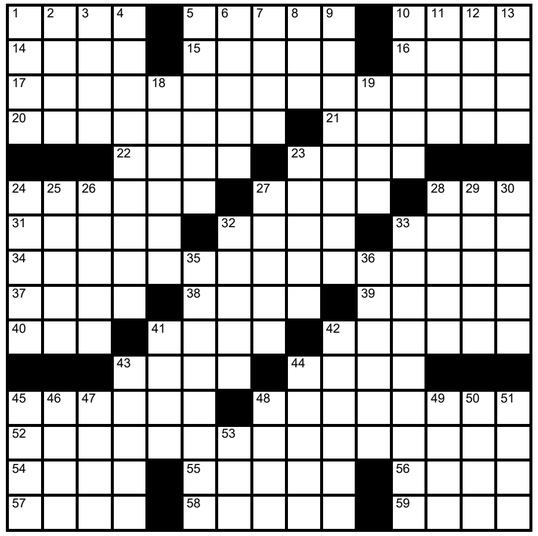
Ann Arbor gave me tenderness, introspection and a sense of community. New York gave me movement, opportunity and raw survival.

Neither city is perfect. Both have deeply flawed systems, and in both, the burden of homelessness is carried by those least equipped to bear it. But each also holds lessons in humanity— some bitter, some beautiful. To anyone reading this: homelessness is not just a statistic. It's a person. It's me.

@pedrocamposbrazil on Instagram

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS
1. Notability
5. Baffled
10. E.P.A. concern
14. Brought into play
15. Mix
16. ___ lamp
17. Small purple flower
20. Upper tooth of dog
21. Motor
22. ___ probandi
23. Cookers
24. Bordeaux product
27. Narc's find, perhaps
28. Actor Alastair
31. Addiction
32. ___ Bowl
33. "___ here"
34. Liason to another country
37. Casting need
38. Brawl
39. Subdues, with "down"
40. "Don't give up!"
41. First minus the t
42. Stout, begins with P
43. As expected
44. opposite of receive
45. Dawn goddess
48. Activiies after skiing
52. Intermittently
54. Enlarge, as a hole
55. Japanese martial art
56. Black cat, maybe
57. Blabs
58. bothered
59. Daddy-o

DOWN
1. Combine
2. Far from ruddy
3. ___ mortals
4. preparation of publication
5. "Do you want to go on a date?"
6. Dweebs
7. harmonic math function
8. .0000001 joule
9. relating to lungs, small air sacs
10. Drudges
11. French Sudan, today
12. Beehive, e.g.
13. Box office take
18. group of nine items
19. "What's gotten ___ you?"
23. American worker
24. Mariner's aid
25. Worse, as excuses go
26. Munk community building
27. Acclaim
28. Peter, Paul or Mary
29. Drive
30. Chaotic
32. Covered with hair
33. Between the 2nd and 3rd base
35. Country; its capital is Colombo
36. Blotto
41. Wrath
42. French red wine
43. Student housing
44. Digger
45. Ethereal
46. Eye layer
47. Acquire
48. Barley beards
49. Jerk
50. Castle part
51. Getaway spots
53. "___ the fields we go"

by Roberto Isla Caballero, Groundcover vendor No. 347

Sudoku ★★☆☆☆☆ 4puz.com

		9	3		5	1		
	6						7	
5			7		6			4
8		6	2		4	7		9
				7				
1		7	6		9	4		3
4			8		1			7
	5						2	
		3	5		2	8		

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *July 11, 2025 edition*

1	7	3	2	8	9	4	5	6
8	6	9	1	5	4	2	3	7
2	4	5	7	6	3	1	8	9
5	1	2	3	9	6	7	4	8
9	8	7	4	2	1	5	6	3
6	3	4	8	7	5	9	1	2
7	5	6	9	1	8	3	2	4
4	9	1	6	3	2	8	7	5
3	2	8	5	4	7	6	9	1

recovery RESOURCE CORNER

FRIENDS OF LITTLE HOUSE RECOVERY CENTER
802 N River St., Ypsilanti
734-219-5051 Recovery meetings 7 days a week. Call for times

IN THE ROOMS
intherooms.com/livemeetings/list
Online recovery meetings 24|7

AL-ANON
1475 Westfield Ave., Ann Arbor
734-995-4949
Meeting information: afgdistrict5.org|meeting-calendar
Meetings for family and friends of those with an addiction. Literature about working Al-Anons program and supportive readings

ALANO CLUB
995 N Maple Rd., Ann Arbor,
734-668-8138
Recovery meetings seven days a week. 10 a.m.- 9 p.m. Commissary, pool table and TV

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
1-800-230-4085
Call for meeting times.
michigan-na.org/washtenaw-area/meetings/

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, HURON VALLEY AREA INTERGROUP
31 S. Huron, Ypsilanti MI 48197
734-482-0707
Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 1:00-6:00 p.m.
Meeting Locator (Countywide and beyond) and Helpline Number 734-482- 5700.
Website includes up to date meeting locator and other resources: hvai.org|

DAWN FARM
6633 Stony Creek Rd., Ypsilanti
734-485-8725
— Long term residential: Farm location (located in Ypsilanti 36 beds) and Dawn Farm Downtown location (located in Ann Arbor 13 beds)
— Up to 90 day residential
— Public funding available for those who qualify
— Transitional housing: Houses and apartments across Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti (160 beds total)
— 12 step meetings daily
— Outpatient services in Ann Arbor
— Community Corrections Outreach

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• Steps to take if encountering an overdose situation.
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SUMMER FEST
Saturday, August 23rd
11am - 6pm
Parkridge Park
Join us for the annual Parkridge Summerfest and Joe Dulin Community Day!
Community Resource Fair
12pm to 3pm
• Nearly 100 community organizations
• Community resources
• University of Michigan Health tent with skin checks, lung function tests, hiring managers, and more!
This year's event will also include:
• Local music artists
• Free food
• Small business vendors
Grills, alcohol, and dogs are NOT allowed!
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summer caprese skewers

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
36 cherry tomatoes
18 mini mozzarella balls
36 basil leaves
Olive oil
Balsamic reduction, for drizzling
Sea salt and ground black pepper
6 wood skewers

Directions:

Thread the tomatoes, mozzarella, and basil onto mini skewers, bracketing tomatoes with basil and separating each set with a mozzarella ball. (Six tomatoes with basil and three mozzarella balls per stick.) Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic reduction and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve as a side dish or appetizer.

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OFFER EXPIRES 8/22/2025

GROUNDCOVER 15

For the first time, Groundcover is celebrating a major milestone.
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OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS
FROM THE GROUND UP
Join us for an evening of reunion, music, food and drink, and a gallery walk of Groundcover's history.

Be a part of celebrating where we started, where we are, and where we are going!
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First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor
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Purchase tickets online at givebutter.com/gcn15
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